

BROADCASTING METHOD AND BROADCAST SIGNAL RECEIVING APPARATUS

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a broadcasting method and a broadcast signal receiving apparatus for presenting contents of video information such as a picture through a broadcasting network, more particularly, to a broadcasting method and a broadcast signal receiving apparatus wherein information presented through a broadcasting network and auxiliary information presented through other media such as package media can be watched and listened to in an interlocked manner.

Background Art

In the conventional system, edited video / audio information is broadcasted during a broadcasting band of time set as a program. Thus, the viewer can watch and listen to only part of such video / audio information actually broadcasted by a broadcasting station. For example, in the case of a news program, only part of gathered video information can be watched and listened to. In the case of a movie program, on the other hand, only part of a movie presented at a movie theater can be watched during the period

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Meanwhile, in recent years, there has been implemented a data broadcasting system whereby text data related to video / audio information is broadcasted as additional data to the video / audio information by appending the text data in the blanking signal of the video information. For example, systems called IT - vision and Intel - Intericast are known. In these data broadcasting systems, text data is described in a predetermined language such as an HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) in a signal period of time of a video signal not used in video transmission to be broadcasted along with the video signal at the same time. An example of the signal period of time is an VBI (vertical blanking interval). In the broadcast signal receiving apparatus, incoming video / audio information and text data are separated from each other. The video / audio information is played back as it is while the text data is displayed on a screen of a computer as a message related to the video information such as a text, a static picture or a graphic. In this way, the viewer is capable of not only watching and listening to the video / audio information but also obtaining information on its program at the same time.

In the data broadcasting system whereby auxiliary information is broadcasted by using the VBI with a low information transmission capacity, however, there is a limit on the amount of auxiliary information that can be transmitted at a time, making it impossible to broadcast a large amount of data such as video information as auxiliary information. While video information and related information are broadcasted at the same time, they are independent of each other, thus, difficult to utilize related information in a process of synthesizing a video information such as a search for original information based on the related information and correlation of a scene cut out from a movie with the original movie.

Disclosure of the Invention

It is an object of the present invention to provide the viewer with video / audio data which can not be included in broadcast information so far as an auxiliary information by using a means adopting a broadcasting procedure different from the normal broadcasting procedure wherein the auxiliary information is synthesized automatically in the broadcast signal receiving apparatus with the broadcast information to generate final information which appears to the viewer as if the final information had been broadcasted as a continuous single program.

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Brief Description of Drawings

Fig. 1 schematically shows a package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system;

Fig. 3 shows the data format of broadcast information received by the 1st embodiment;

Fig. 4 shows the data format of auxiliary information received by the 1st embodiment;

Fig. 5 shows a typical data format of an auxiliary information control table;

Fig. 6 shows a typical video recording control table;

Fig. 7 shows a sequence of user operations;

Fig. 8 shows 2 different algorithms adopted by a video synthesizing unit for synthesizing broadcast information and auxiliary information;

Fig. 9 shows the system configuration of a 2nd embodiment implementing a broadcast signal receiving apparatus;

Fig. 10 shows the data format of broadcast information and auxiliary information received by the 2nd embodiment; and

Fig. 11 shows the data format of auxiliary information handled in a 3rd embodiment.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

Fig. 1 explains the concept of a package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system. In the system, contents of a broadcast program are created by a contents provider 900 and the contents are partly delivered to a broadcasting station 901 as broadcast information 201. The broadcasting station 901 broadcasts the broadcast information 201 through the infrastructure such as a satellite, a ground wave facility or a CATV. The contents provider 900 also distributes other information related to the broadcast information 201, through the Internet and package media, as auxiliary information 301. The viewer side(at a home 902) receives the broadcast

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The following is a description of an example to which the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system is applied.

When distributing the contents of a large size theater movie, scenes in the movie are cut out to be the length of the broadcast information contents provider 900 adjusted to a broadcast time. The contents provider 900 delivers the movie-through-the-cutting-process to a broadcasting station, as broadcast information, to thereby be broadcasted to homes. On the other hand, the cut out scenes are sent to the homes as auxiliary information through other means such as the Internet, package media and data broadcasting systems. A broadcast signal receiving apparatus at each home receives the broadcast information and the auxiliary information, thereafter, displays both the pieces of information on a monitor in the interlocked

manner based on indexes appended to both. This enables the viewer to watch and listen to the contents of the complete movie. In a news program, part of news not broadcasted can also be presented to the viewer as auxiliary information. As a result, there is born a new information distribution business for distributing and delivering more detailed subjects, which are not broadcasted as a news program, as auxiliary information in the way described above.

The package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system can also be applied to pair rental control. A pair rental control function prevents pictures and expressions of the original work inappropriate for juvenile viewers from being displayed. To be more specific, portions of the original work for general viewers are broadcasted as broadcast information whereas scenes for adult viewers are only delivered separately as auxiliary information by using typically package media. This allows the viewer to select whether or not such auxiliary information is to be displayed at a time to watch and listen to a broadcast program, implementing the pair rental control function to appropriately exclude such scenes from displayed information. Thus, chances that scenes inappropriate for juvenile viewers are inadvertently watched and listened to are eliminated.

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Moreover, the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system can also be applied to broadcast advertisements (CMs). To put it in detail, by delivering a CM such as a product advertisement as auxiliary information, the CM can be played back in synchronization with a program properly. As a result, the number of opportunities in which a product advertisement is presented to the viewer in addition to CMs included in broadcast information can be increased. By setting an auxiliary information CM time in addition to the traditional CM time, the broadcasting station is capable of increasing the advertisement revenue. In addition, the CM provider is capable of appending a CM relevant to a program to the program broadcasted by a broadcasting station that does not broadcast the CM. For example, an index of 'the name of a program' included in broadcast information can be used to play back an advertisement of a product such as a car appearing in the program from a CD-ROM with timing specified by the index. In this way, the CM provider is capable of letting the viewer watch and listen to a CM even if the broadcast station does not broadcast the CM.

The following is a description of an application of computer graphics to the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system. If the playback apparatus includes a processor that is capable of executing

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a program, auxiliary information played back in a manner interlocked with an operation to display broadcast information will not be limited to video and audio data described above. For example, a CG program, a program displaying computer graphics (CG), can be provided as auxiliary information. That is, a CG program can be delivered as auxiliary information by using package media. Invocation of a CG program is triggered by index information included in broadcast information. By providing a parameter required for a CG program from a broadcast information, a CG character moving synchronously with the broadcasting is let appear on a displayed screen of the broadcast information. Such an application is particularly effective for programs such as an animation one. The viewer is capable of carrying out operations such as replacing some characters appearing in an animation program with CG characters selected from package media. If the viewer is also capable of creating a CG character by itself, the viewer will be able to enjoy to see a CG character created by itself appearing and acting in a broadcasted program. Such a joy can not be realized by the conventional TV broadcasting.

In the mean time, standardization including one known as MPEG4 is making progress in recent years. In the video and audio encoding field, a technology called content based encoding has been implemented. The content based encoding

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For example, video data of a 1st person appearing in a program and video data of a 2nd person other than the 1st person are each subjected to content base encoding with the 2nd person closely imitating behaviors of the 1st person. The encoded data of the 1st person is broadcasted as part of broadcast information while the encoded video data of the

2nd person is recorded on package media for distribution. If only the broadcast information is received and played back, the 1st person will appear in a program as it is along with other objects such as a background. If the broadcast information is played back in a manner interlocked with the package media, on the other hand, the viewer will be capable of watching and listening to video data wherein the 1st person is replaced by the 2nd person.

The following is a description of a broadcast signal receiving apparatus of the present invention which makes the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system described above feasible.

Fig. 2 shows the system configuration of a 1st embodiment implementing a broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 provided by the present invention. As shown in the figure, the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 comprises:

a broadcast signal receiving means 101 for receiving broadcast information 201;

a storage means 106 such as a hard disc drive for temporarily storing broadcast information 201 received by the broadcast signal receiving means;

a removable media drive 104 for inputting auxiliary information 301;

an input means 107 for inputting a user intention;

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a processor 102 for carrying out processing to convert broadcast information 201 and auxiliary information 301 into a video signal;

a display unit 108 such as a color monitor for displaying information;

a display means 103 for converting video data generated by the processor 102 into a signal to be displayed on the display unit 108; and

a memory unit 105 used for storing programs to be executed by the processor 102 and temporarily storing data in the course of signal processing carried out by the processor 102.

While it is desirable to put a mountable as well as removable random - access medium such as a CD - ROM, a DVD and an MO in the removable media drive 104, a sequential medium such as a tape is also acceptable as well.

Broadcast information 201 is stored in the storage means 106 in program units. When the viewer watches and listens to a program, broadcast information 201 stored in the storage means 106 is transferred to the processor 102 which then carries out processing such as decoding on the broadcast information 201 by using the memory unit 105 as a work area. A result of the processing is then output to the display means 103. If an index is extracted from the broadcast information 201 during the processing, auxiliary

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It should be noted that means used for furnishing auxiliary information 301 are not limited to media such as a CD - ROM. Auxiliary information 301 can also be supplied to the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 by way of a network such as the Internet or a data broadcasting system such as a satellite broadcasting system or a ground wave broadcasting system. In this case, auxiliary information 301 received from a partner on the Internet or a broadcasting station of the data broadcasting system is transferred to the storage means 106 or the memory unit 105 shown in Fig. 2 to be stored therein. In either case, the auxiliary information 301 stored in the recording means 106 or the memory unit 105 is played back in a manner interlocked with broadcast information 201.

Fig. 3 shows the data format of broadcast information 201 received by the 1st embodiment. As shown in the figure, a plurality of program indexes 203 are inserted between pieces of video and audio data of each program. Each of the program indexes 203 includes information such as a program ID 204 for uniquely identifying a broadcast program, a

program name 205 given to the program, a start time 206 of the program, an end time 207 of the program and one or more auxiliary information IDs 208 each for identifying a piece of auxiliary information 301 to be interlocked during an operation to play back the program. In the case of an analog broadcast signal, a program index 203 is embedded in a VBI region of the video signal by using the ordinary NTSC system video signal. In the case of a digital broadcast signal, on the other hand, a program index 203 is broadcasted as a control packet other than the video signal.

It is desirable to insert a plurality of program indexes 203 into a program. This is because, if a program index 203 is inserted into only the head of a program, no program index 203 can be acquired in a recording or playback operation of the program starting from a position after the only one program index 203, making it impossible to play back the program in a mode interlocked with auxiliary information 301 with the auxiliary information 301 used as a supplement to broadcast information 201. By inserting a plurality of program indexes 203 into a program, however, this problem can be solved. A program index 203 may include auxiliary information IDs 208 of all pieces of auxiliary information 301 to be interlocked with the program or include auxiliary information IDs 208 of only pieces of auxiliary information

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Fig. 4 shows the data format of auxiliary information 301 received by the 1st embodiment. As shown in the figure, auxiliary information 301 comprises a plurality of individual auxiliary information pieces 304 and an auxiliary information control table 303 for centrally controlling the individual auxiliary information pieces 304. Each of the individual auxiliary information pieces 304 comprises audio / video data 306 and an auxiliary information index 305 including information for identifying a partner program to be supplemented by the video / audio data 306. The auxiliary information index 305 comprises an auxiliary information ID 307 for distinguishing the individual auxiliary information pieces 304 from each other, the title 308 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304, a partner program ID 309 for identifying a partner program to be supplemented by the video / audio data 306, a supplementation start time 310 with the beginning of a partner program to be supplemented taken as a base, a supplementation end time 311 and time length information 312 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304.

Fig. 5 shows a typical data format of the auxiliary information control table 303. As shown in the figure, the auxiliary information control table 303 is a single

collection of attributes of auxiliary information indexes 305 of all individual auxiliary information pieces 304 and storage locations 401. That is, each line of the auxiliary information control table 303 comprises attributes of an auxiliary information index 305 and one storage location 401. A storage location 401 is an address in a medium or a storage device at which the video / audio data 306 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304 is stored. The auxiliary information indexes 305 cataloged in the auxiliary information control table 303 are sorted by partner ID 309. Note that it is desirable to automatically copy the auxiliary information table 303 into the storage means 306 at the time the medium storing the auxiliary information table 303 is mounted on the removable media drive 104. With the auxiliary information control table 303 copied into the storage means 106, a search of the table 303 for a desired piece of information can be carried out at a high speed.

Next, a package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening method is explained. The package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening method comprises the steps of:

carrying out a recording operation to record broadcast information 201 into the storage means 106; and

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carrying out a synthesis / playback operation to play back a program while supplementing the broadcast information 201 with individual auxiliary information pieces 304.

First of all, the recording operation is explained by referring to Figs. 2 to 6. The viewer records broadcast information 201 into the storage means 106 in the same way as a TV program is recorded into a VTR (video tape recorder). In the case of a storage means 106 implemented by a digital information storage means such as a hard disc, an analog broadcast signal is converted into a digital signal such as an MPEG stream by a video capture in the broadcast signal receiving means 101 and the resulting digital signal is then stored in the storage means 106. The viewer is allowed to specify a recording time in the case of reserved recording or unattended recording, or carry out a manual operation to start and end the recording. The processor 102 receives and stores incoming broadcast information 201 in accordance with a request coming from a timer not shown in the figure in the case of unattended recording or a request made by the viewer in the case of manual recording. At that time, the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 catalogs the recorded program into a video recording control table 501, a table for cataloging recorded programs, like one shown in Fig. 6. As shown in the figure, each line in the video

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recording table 201 comprises a program ID 204 as well as a program name 205 extracted from a program index 203 of the broadcast information 201, a recording start time 504, a recording end time 505 and a recording location 506 or an address in the storage means 106 indicating the beginning of an area for storing the broadcast information 201. It should be noted that the recording start time 504 and the recording end time 505 shown in the video recording control table 501 are times with a program start time 206 of the recorded program taken as a reference. That is to say, the recording start time 504 and the recording end time 505 are obtained by subtracting the program start time 206 from the time the recording is actually started and the time the recording is actually ended respectively.

Next, a typical synthesis / playback operation is explained by referring to Figs. 2 to 7. In order to obtain individual auxiliary information pieces 304 to be used for supplementing a program, a recording medium containing auxiliary information 301 is mounted on the removable media drive 104. When the recording operation described above is not carried out, the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 carries out a through operation wherein the processor 102 processes incoming broadcast information 201 and displays the processed broadcast information on the display unit 108 by way of the display means 103 as is the case with

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When the viewer selects the playback button 602 by using a cursor 601 or presses a playback request button provided on the input means 107 such as a remote controller, the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 displays a recorded program menu 603 created at that time from the video recording control table 501 on the display unit 108 in order to let the viewer select a program recorded in the storage unit 106 to be played back. The viewer then selects a desired recorded program from the recorded program menu 603 as shown in Fig. 7B by specifying the program name thereof. As the name of the desired recorded program is specified, the video recording control table 501 is searched for the name 205 of the desired program and the program ID 204 thereof is acquired.

Next, the processor 102 forms a decision as to whether or not auxiliary information 201 can be acquired from a recording medium mounted on the removable media driver 104. The decision is formed by determining whether or not the program ID 204 of the selected program acquired from the video recording control table 501 exists as a partner program ID 309 in the auxiliary information control table 303 which

was copied from the recording medium into the storage means 106 when the recording medium was mounted on the removable media drive 104 for the first time. If the outcome of the decision indicates that auxiliary information 201 can not be acquired, that is, if no partner program ID 309 in the auxiliary information control table 303 matches the program ID 204, supplementation of the program by auxiliary information 201 is ignored. The processor 102 then searches the video recording control table 501 using the program ID 204 as a key for the recording location 506. Subsequently, the processor 102 reads out the program from the location 506 to play back it. If the outcome of the decision indicates that auxiliary information 201 can be acquired, that is, if a partner program ID 309 in the auxiliary information control table 303 matches the program ID 204, on the other hand, the matching partner program ID 309 is used for fetching attributes 307 to 312 and storage locations 401 of each auxiliary information index 305 associated with the desired program to be played back from the auxiliary information control table 303. An auxiliary information menu 604 shown in Fig. 7C is then displayed on the screen. It should be noted more than one auxiliary information index 305 in the auxiliary information control table 303 may have a partner program ID 309 matching the program ID 204, that is, more than one individual auxiliary information piece 304

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may be associated with the desired program. As shown in Fig. 7C, the auxiliary information menu 604 includes a table of individual auxiliary information pieces 304 associated with the desired program and a 'Select all' button which is operated if it is desired to specify all the individual auxiliary information pieces 304. Beneath the auxiliary information menu 604, the following buttons 605 to 607 are also displayed on the screen shown in Fig. 7C. The 'Playback auxiliary information' button 605 is selected if it is desired to play back only the individual auxiliary information pieces 304. On the other hand, the 'Playback program' button 606 is selected if it is desired to play back the broadcast information 201 only, ignoring the individual auxiliary information pieces 304. Finally, the 'Synthesis / Playback' button 607 is selected if it is desired to play back the program by supplementing the broadcast information 201 of the program with the individual auxiliary information pieces 304.

Assume that the viewer selects an 'auxiliary information 1' item representing one of the individual auxiliary information pieces 304 listed on the auxiliary information menu 604 and the 'Synthesis / Playback' button 607. In this case, the processor 102 searches the video recording control table 501 using the program ID 204 as a key for a recording location 506, a recording start time 504

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and a recording end time 505 of the specific broadcast information 201 to be played back. Then, the processor 102 searches the auxiliary information control table 303 for a recording location 401 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304 corresponding to the 'auxiliary information 1' selected from the auxiliary information menu 604 to be synthesized and played back with the specific broadcast information 201, a supplementation start time 310 and a supplementation end time 311 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304 used in the synthesized playback.

The recording start time 504 of the specific broadcast information 201 to be played back is compared with the supplementation start time 310 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304 to be synthesized. Since the recording start time 504 and the synthesis start time 310 are both given with the program start time taken as a reference, the comparison can be decided to be justifiable. Video and audio data of the information with the smaller start time is played back as shown in Fig. 7D.

An individual auxiliary information piece 304 is played back as follows. The processor 102 compares the supplementation start time 310 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304 with the contents of a timer also taking the program start time as a reference all the time.

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As the contents of the timer become equal to the supplementation start time 310, the operation to play back the broadcast information 201 is temporarily suspended and an operation to play back the individual auxiliary information piece 304 is started. As the operation to play back the individual auxiliary information piece 304 is finished, the operation to play back the broadcast information 201 is resumed beginning with a portion at the supplementation start time 310 or the supplementation end time 311 of the individual auxiliary information piece 304. If the operation to play back the broadcast information 201 is resumed beginning with a portion at the supplementation start time 310, the individual auxiliary information piece 304 is merely inserted into the broadcast information 201. A method of synthesis to insert an individual auxiliary information piece 304 into broadcast information 201 is referred to as an insertion type synthesis method. If the operation to play back the broadcast information 201 is resumed beginning with a portion at the supplementation end time 311, on the other hand, the individual auxiliary information piece 304 replaces part of the broadcast information 201 between the supplementation start time 310 and the supplementation end time 311. A method of synthesis to replace part of broadcast information 201 with an individual auxiliary information piece 304 is referred to

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If the 'Play back auxiliary information' button 605 shown in Fig. 7C is selected by the user, only individual auxiliary information pieces 304 are played back sequentially one piece after another beginning with one with a smallest supplementation start time 310 shown in the auxiliary information control table 303. If the 'Play back program' button 606 shown in Fig. 7C is selected by the user, on the other hand, only the broadcast information 201 selected from the menu shown in Fig. 7B is played back. In addition, interface buttons 608 resembling buttons on a remote controller used for controlling an ordinary VTR are displayed on the screen as shown in Fig. 7D. The interface buttons 608 allow the user to specify operations to start, halt, temporarily halt, run fast and rewind the playback of the video data. When the user specifies the operation to halt the operation by operating one of the interface buttons 608, the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 terminates the operation to play back video data and resets the timer.

In the above description, there is assumed a method whereby broadcast information 201 is recorded into the storage means 106 shown in Fig. 2 in program units and, in

an operation to play back a program, broadcast information 201 of the program is synthesized with auxiliary information 301. If the read / write speed of a hard disc drive used as the storage means 106 is not high enough to keep up with the recording and playback operations, however, part of the memory unit 105 can be used as a buffer between the processor 102 and the storage means 106. The buffer allows the operations to record broadcast and play back information 201 into and from the storage means 106 to appear as if they were carried out concurrently. As a result, the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening method can be applied to a program which is currently being broadcasted.

The buffer cited above works as follows. Broadcast information 201 received by the broadcast signal receiving means 101 is stored in a 1st buffer area in the memory unit 105. As the amount of stored broadcast information 201 reaches a predetermined value, the broadcast information 201 is transferred to the storage means 106 at one time as a batch. While the transfer is being carried out, the operation to store broadcast information 201 received by the broadcast signal receiving means 101 can be continued. In the mean time, broadcast information 201 transferred to and recorded in the storage means 106 is transferred back to a 2nd buffer area in the memory unit 105 in appropriate units.

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to be played back. Pieces of broadcast information 201 in the 2nd buffer area are sequentially processed one piece after another by the processor 102 and output to the display means 103. In this way, while currently broadcasted broadcast information 201 is being recorded in the storage means 106, a playback operation can be continued at a time delay to a certain degree. While such simultaneous recording and playback operations are being carried out in this way, auxiliary information 301 can be used as a supplement in accordance with program indexes included in the broadcast information 201 being played back. Time delays are resulted in due to supplementation by using auxiliary information 301. However, such time delays can be absorbed by the simultaneous recording and playback operations. If the insertion type synthesis method described above is taken as a technique of supplementation, the time delay between broadcast information being recorded and be information 201 being played back is widened. If the capacity of the storage means 106 is larger than a size corresponding to the time delay, however, there will be no missed information at all.

Fig. 8 shows two different algorithms adopted in a synthesis of broadcast information 201 and auxiliary information 301. To be more specific, Fig. 8A is a diagram showing the insertion type synthesis method and Fig. 8B

It should be noted that, in an effort made in the actual implementation to adjust timing in a playback operation, auxiliary information 301 is read out earlier

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Next, a 2nd embodiment implementing a broadcast signal receiving apparatus provided by the present invention is explained. In the case of the 2nd embodiment, auxiliary information 301 is also transmitted in the same way as broadcast information 201 instead of being delivered by using a recording medium. Fig. 9 shows the system configuration of the 2nd embodiment. Since, auxiliary information 301 is also transmitted as is the case with broadcast information 201, as shown in the figure, the 2nd embodiment is obtained by omitting the removable media drive 104 from the system configuration of the 1st embodiment shown in Fig. 2. Instead, an information separating program 801 stored in the memory unit 105 is used for separating auxiliary information 301 from broadcast information 201 received by the broadcast signal receiving means 101. A method for acquiring auxiliary information 301 in an operation to record video data is also different from that

An operation to record video data carried out in the 2nd embodiment is explained as follows. The broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100 receives broadcast information 201 and auxiliary information 301 relevant thereto transmitted by a broadcasting station. Fig. 10 shows the data format of the broadcast information 201 and the auxiliary information 201 received by the 2nd embodiment. The auxiliary information 301 is embedded in a program index 203. The processor 102 executes the program 801 to extract auxiliary information 301 from information received by the broadcast signal receiving means 101 and store the information in the storage means 106.

It should be noted that, in some cases, a large amount of auxiliary information 301 can not be transmitted by including the auxiliary information 301 in a program index 203 of broadcast information 201 as shown in Fig. 10 due to broadcasting specifications. In such a case, auxiliary information 301 is transmitted by splitting it into a plurality of packets. Typically, such packets are transmitted in advance independently of the associated broadcast information 201 prior to the time band of the program of the broadcast information 201. The processor 102 employed in the broadcast signal receiving apparatus 100

stores auxiliary information 301 included in each packet. As the last packet is received, pieces of auxiliary information 301 are arranged in an order of sequence numbers included in the packets to reconstruct the entire auxiliary information 301. The 2nd embodiment allows the viewer to automatically acquire auxiliary information 301 by receiving a broadcast signal without the need to resort to another means such as a recording medium used in the 1st embodiment for distributing auxiliary information 301.

Next, a 3rd embodiment of the present invention is explained. In the case of the 3rd embodiment, the contents of auxiliary information 301 are a CG program, a sentence written in the HTML or an operation described as a script. In one typical version of the 3rd embodiment, link information described in the HTML is received as auxiliary information 301. Video data generated by a source on the Internet is then acquired by tracing the link and displayed by executing a browser program. In another typical version of the 3rd embodiment, a program for generating and displaying CGs (computer graphics) is received as auxiliary information 301. Then, by directly executing this CG program, CG video data can be displayed. Fig. 11 shows the data format of auxiliary information 301 handled by the 3rd embodiment. As shown in the figure, an individual auxiliary information piece 304 comprises an auxiliary information

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index 305 and a program or a script 1001. The auxiliary information index 305 includes a data type field 1002 indicating the data type of the program or the script 1001. When executing a program or a script 1001, the processor 102 refers to the data type field 1002, adjusting the execution of the program or the script 1001 to the data type specified in the field 1002.

Unlike an operation to play back video and audio data, the execution time of a program or a script much depends on the performance of the processor 102 carrying out processing and the complexity of a network including a data source indicated by a link specified as auxiliary information 301. It is thus difficult to estimate the length of the execution time. For this reason, the auxiliary information index 305 includes a processing time field 1003. A positive value set in this processing time field 1003 is an effective period of time during which a result of execution of the program or the script 1001 is to be displayed. As the period of time lapses, the operation of the broadcast signal receiving apparatus is automatically switched to an operation to play back video and audio data 202 of broadcast information 201 of the program. On the other hand, a negative value set in this processing time field 1003 indicates that the execution of the program or the script 1001 is continued till an instruction to end the execution is issued by the viewer.

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Thus, in the case of a positive value set in this processing time field 1003, the processor 102 keeps monitoring the execution time while the program or the script 1002 of auxiliary information 201 is being executed. By virtue of the 3rd embodiment, it becomes possible to provide the viewer with auxiliary information 301 including computer graphics, numbers, texts and figures in addition to video data by using various kinds of media.

Industrial Applicability

The present invention makes a package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system feasible. In the package media interlocked broadcasting / watching / listening system auxiliary information relevant to broadcast information is distributed by using for example package media and, by playing back and displaying the auxiliary information and the broadcast information synchronously, the broadcast information can be supplemented with the auxiliary information.

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